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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Harcum Junior College in order to ascertain what modes of learning students preferred and to determine which of these learning modes afforded the students the most enjoyment. A survey was distributed to the student body; a 50% rate of response was achieved. Results indicated that students felt they learned most from class discussion, lectures, and field trips, in that order, while independent study, movies, readings, and non-class rap sessions were ranked lower in terms of how much students felt they learned. For learning modes which offered students the most enjoyment, a plurality of students ranked field trips as being the most enjoyable, followed by movies and class discussions; independent study, non-class rap sessions, readings and lectures were ranked as being less enjoyable. Overall, the survey data did not reveal that student levels of enjoyment regarding the various modes of learning were congruent with their preferences among these learning modes. A number of teaching/learning techniques were perceived by students to be either a preferred mode of learning and/or of preferred enjoyment value, thus indicating that a variety of teaching techniques is the expressed group preference of students. (JDS)

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Does Enjoyment Accompany Learning
(A Student Perceptions Inquiry)

1. The subject of this report raises other tantilizing questions: should education be an enjoyable experience? do students believe they learn better if they are enjoying the learning process?

2. Often implicit to the teaching-learning process, as Bers[1] points out, is the assumption that learning and enjoyment accompany each other. As perceived by the learners, do they? To answer this question for Harcum students (a two-year, private, independent college for women), they were invited, in the Fall of 1975, just before the end of the semester, to respond anonymously to a brief questionnaire (attached).

3. Their self-assessed perceptions were obtained relating to a variety of learning-teaching experiences, and they also were requested to express their relative enjoyment levels of these teaching-learning techniques. Some 371 or 50% of the total student body responded with useable questionnaires. The following paragraphs report and discuss these responses.

4. Table 1, below, contains the group rankings of the various learning modes, listed in descending order of preference. These are the non-parenthetical numbers. These percentages represent the total numerical 'scores' given by these respondents, expressed as a proportion of the theoretical maximum scores of 7 for each member of this population. In effect, this listing yields a descending-order ranking by the group of their preferred learning modes.

5. The parenthetical percentages and rankings which appear in Table 1 reflect the enjoyment-assessments for these respondents. Again, these are expressed as a percentage of the theorical maximum score of 7 for each respondent in the group.

Table 1: Learning Modes Preferences and Enjoyment Levels Rankings

	Learning Mode				
1st	Class Discussion	=	80%	(65%)	(3rd)
2nd	Lectures	=	61%	(41%)	(7th)
3rd	Field Trips	=	58%	(81%)	(1st)
4th	Movies	=	56%	(73%)	(2nd)
5th	Readings	=	55%	(44%)	(6th)
6th	Independent Study	=	54%	(47%)	(5th)
7th	Non-class rap sessions	=	41%	(53%)	(4th)

(1) Bers, Trudy H., "The Relationship Between Learning and Enjoyment: A Study of Student Perceptions of Teaching Techniques." Oakton Community College; Oct. 1975. (ERIC Document ED 119764)

JC 770 190

6. Scanning Table 1, it is immediately apparent that there is no obvious 'matching' between the learning modes rankings and enjoyment levels rankings. For example, although the group ranked "Non-class rap sessions" as the method from which they learned the least, they ranked it in the median, 4th level of enjoyment.

7. Or - "Lectures" as a learning mode received the second highest ranking, and yet it is assessed as being the least-enjoyed method among these seven modes. Or - "Movies", only median 4th ranked as a learning mode, are 2nd ranked among enjoyment levels. With the exception of the 5th and 6th rankings, where only a one-interval ranking difference exists, in all other cases at least a 2-ranking differential exists between preferred learning mode and the enjoyment level ranking associated in the mode.

8. For this group of respondents, their learning mode preferences and enjoyment levels do not reveal 'matching' or close association. This may be, in part, due to the fact that the "Lecture" method - although least-enjoyed, is by far the most frequently utilized teaching technique, and therefore is 'high-ranked' as a learning mode as much because of its frequency as it is because of an 'absolute' preference.

9. Unquestionably in a 'class' by itself as a preferred learning mode is "Class Discussion" Although these respondents top-ranked "Field Trips" and "Movies" among their enjoyment preferences, "Class Discussion" follows closely in 3rd ranking order as an enjoyable technique for which some 41% gave it a 'top' learning mode score of "7".

10. As Table 1 reveals "Class Discussion" is, by far, the most preferred learning mode as perceived, in the words of the questionnaire,..."in terms of how much You learn from each method". It is followed, with a sharp 20% drop in preference-strength, by 2nd ranked "Lecture" mode. Then, among these six-remaining modes there is only a 20% spread, to a 'low' of 41%. Overall, there is approximately twice as much preference expressed for 1st-ranked "Class Discussion" as there is for 7th-ranked "Non-class rap sessions."

11. From this range of expressed learning mode preferences, it is quite evident that these students believe they learn from a variety of teaching techniques. Further evidence to support this conclusion is summarized in Table 2, below. When the "Most" score of "7" is tallied-up for each of these learning modes, the number of times the particular mode is evaluated as a "Most" learning method, is expressed in this table as a percentage of the total respondents.

Table 2:- Descending Order Ranking of "Most" Learning Modes

Rank	Learning Mode	% of Respondents
1st	Class Discussion	41%
2nd	Lectures	16%
3rd	Field Trips	12%
4th	Independent Study	10%
5th	Movies	7%
6th	Readings	6%
7th	Non-class rap sessions	4%

12. If one notes the top-3 ranked learning modes in Tables 1 and 2, it is apparent that these respondents are consistent in what they perceive to be their most effective modes of learning. Both listings offer the same order of preference, with "Class Discussion" clearly surpassing all others.

13. Bers (see footnote (1) citation), in her study of some 99 students enrolled in basic American Government classes, found that their evaluations of learning modes were: 1st = Lectures; 2nd = Class Discussions; and 3rd = Readings. Although both her sample and the Harcum group selected the same two modes among their top-2, they did not perceive the same technique for their 3rd-ranked learning mode preference.

14. Table 3, which follows, summarizes the "Most" score of "7" tallied for each of these seven learning modes - in terms of the enjoyment these respondents associate with the particular mode. These are expressed as percentages of the total respondents who reported "7" or "Most" scores.

Table 3:- Descending Order Ranking of "Most" Enjoyment Scores

Ranking	Learning Mode	% of Respondents
1st	Field Trips	44%
2nd	Movies	15%
3rd	Class Discussions	11%
4th	Independent Study	10%
5th	Non-class rap sessions	9%
6th	Readings	5%
7th	Lectures	4%

15. Scanning Tables 2 and 3, there is immediately apparent a rather close 'matching' in the numbers who selected score "7" ("most"), both for learning mode preference and enjoyment level preference. With the exception of the 3% 'spread' between the two 1st-ranked items, there is no more than a 2% difference between the other comparable-rank percentages reported.

16. As one might further anticipate, there is again a consistency to be noted in the responses of these 351 students. As revealed in their top-3 rankings in Table 3, and their top-3 'enjoyment' rankings in Table 1, they are the same three modes of learning in both listings.

17. If the top-3 rankings in Tables 1, 2, and 3, and the information noted in paragraph 13. above, are combined, as has been done in Table 4, below, two facts are immediately evident:

(1) "Class Discussion" and "Lectures" are the two modes which are top-3 selected both by the Oakland and Harcum groups, and

(2) Among these seven learning modes, five of them are ranked among either the top-3 learning mode preferences or enjoyment level preferences.

Table 4:- All Techniques Ranked Among Top -3

Learning Mode	Harcum	Oakland
Class Discussion	x	x
Lectures	x	x
Field Trips	x	
Readings		x
Movies	x	

18. To briefly summarize, among this group of 371 college women in their first or second year of attendance, they:

(a) evidence a variety of learning modes through which they perceive they learn, the principal one being "Class Discussion".

(b) do not reveal that their levels of enjoyment regarding various modes of learning are congruent with their perceived preferences among these various learning modes.

(c) consistently select the same three types of learning modes as their preferences, and

(d) consistently rank the same three learning modes as the ones they find most enjoyable.

19. The lack of concensus among these students in learning modes preferences is evidenced by the fact that in all but one mode (the "non-class rap sessions") at least a 50%, or higher, level of preference was expressed for each of the remaining six learning modes.

20. This certainly suggests that a number of teaching-learning techniques are perceived by these respondents to be either a preferred mode of learning and/or of preferred enjoyment value. Clearly —— a variety of teaching techniques is the expressed group preference of these students. This offers a stimulating challenge to faculty members.

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Director: Institutional Research

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HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE

A Student Questionnaire

Your views, please. Rank the following learning methods (which are listed alphabetically) in terms of how much You learn from each method. First - decide which method you learn most from. Write the number "7" in the space to the LEFT of this item.

Then decide which you next learn the most from. Write "6" in the space to the LEFT of this item.

Then do the same for "5, 4, 3, 2" and finally "1" for the method you learn least from.

Learning through:

____	Class Discussions	____
____	Field trips	____
____	Independent Study	____
____	Lectures	____
____	Movies	____
____	Readings	____
____	Non-class rap sessions	____

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Now please consider this list a second time. In terms of how much YOU enjoy each method listed, write a "7" to the RIGHT of the method you enjoy most.

Then decide which you next enjoy most. Write "6" in the space to the RIGHT of this item.

Then do the same for "5, 4, 3, 2" and finally "1" for the method you least enjoy.

Many thanks for your helpful assistance.

Boris Blai, Jr.
Director of Research